

MEMORANDUM



TO: Honorable Mayor Mark Mitchell and Councilmembers
FROM: Karyn Lathan, Chair
City of Tempe Family Justice Commission
DATE: August 10, 2017
SUBJECT: Advocacy Center

As you know, the directive provided to the City of Tempe Family Justice Commission by Mayor and Council through city ordinance is as follows:

1. "To advise the city council and assist city departments in promoting access to justice and safety for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and sex trafficking"
2. "To advise the city council and assist city departments in providing leadership and facilitate access to resources that will contribute to wrap-around services and a multidisciplinary response for the victims and survivors."
3. "To advise the city council and assist city departments on coordinating cross training and multidisciplinary tools to provide training opportunities to criminal justice personnel and healthcare providers about educational initiatives and system based standards of practice that are critical to serving the victims of domestic and sexual violence and keeping them safe."
4. "To advise the city council and assist city departments on expanding education and outreach to vulnerable populations."

These directives are in line with Tempe City Council Strategic Priorities: ***Safety & Justice, Community Connection and Quality of Life.***

In consideration of this direction, the Tempe Family Justice Commission has worked diligently over the last several months to review how the city approaches crimes of violence from an investigation/enforcement perspective. The commission has also focused on increasing awareness of methods used to increase and promote reporting, and inventoried the services that are available to victims of crimes. This included analysis of current crime data, an informal needs assessment of victim services currently available, hosting meetings with a variety of stakeholders including service providers and school district representatives, and advocacy center site visits to determine "best practices" within the state.

On average based on 2014 through 2016 crime data, the City of Tempe experiences approximately 110 sexual assaults, 140 domestic violence aggravated assaults, and 1,040 domestic violence misdemeanor assaults.

Through this review, the commission determined that having the ability to treat victims in one location where they can meet with investigating law enforcement officers, healthcare providers, crisis counselors, and victim advocates results in a collaborative response that helps minimize the trauma that the victim may experience and promotes engagement within the criminal justice system.

It is important to note that the City of Tempe has very robust crime victim advocacy services through CARE7. Additionally, CARE7 has partnered with the Tempe Police Department's Special Victims Unit wherein a Victim Advocate has been embedded with detectives and is able to provide immediate and enhanced services to victims of crimes. This has proved to be a very successful project which has resulted in nearly a 100% increase in victim/advocate contacts (approximately 400 victims utilizing CARE 7 services in the first quarter of fiscal year 2017/2018).

Through this review process, the commission has determined that a "best practice" and more importantly a great need exists within our community for a single location within the city that provides comprehensive services to victims of crime. The commission recommends a single location where victims can meet with law enforcement officers, undergo a medical examination by licensed healthcare providers, receive services from victim advocates and engage in counseling all through a "trauma informed" lens. The commission believes that such a facility will enhance victim engagement through the entire criminal justice process and would be extremely beneficial for our victims.

This facility would serve victims of any crime and would be a safe place for the entire community. It is the desire of the Commission that an advocacy center located in the city of Tempe include the following:

- A single facility for all services provided by CARE7, the Tempe Police Department, medical personnel and potentially Arizona Child Protective Services that includes a secure area for victim/advocate/law enforcement interaction
- Administrative offices for CARE7, law enforcement officers, medical personnel and Child Protective Services staff and supportive services
- Open area for meetings and trainings
- Kitchen/dining area for staff and victim utilization
- Large storage areas for victim supplies
- Comfortable rooms for children, teen, and adult victims to receive services
- Separate examination rooms appropriate for children and adults
- Special room with equipment to be used for recording interviews
- Separate area for counseling services (open to the public)
- Location should be centrally located and conveniently accessible for all our victims

The creation of an advocacy center for victims will require a fiscal commitment from the City of Tempe and any potential partners that may collaborate in this effort. Fiscal considerations include general fund expenditures, capital improvement project management, personnel costs to staff the facility and utility and maintenance costs.

Based on the preceding information, the commission recommends that the city council identify key staff members to explore the feasibility of creating such a center in the City of Tempe. Members of the Family Justice Commission are willing to assist in any way we can to move this initiative forward and I am happy to attend a future Tempe City Council Meeting to discuss this recommendation in more detail.

Respectfully,

Karyn Lathan, Chair

Family Justice Commission